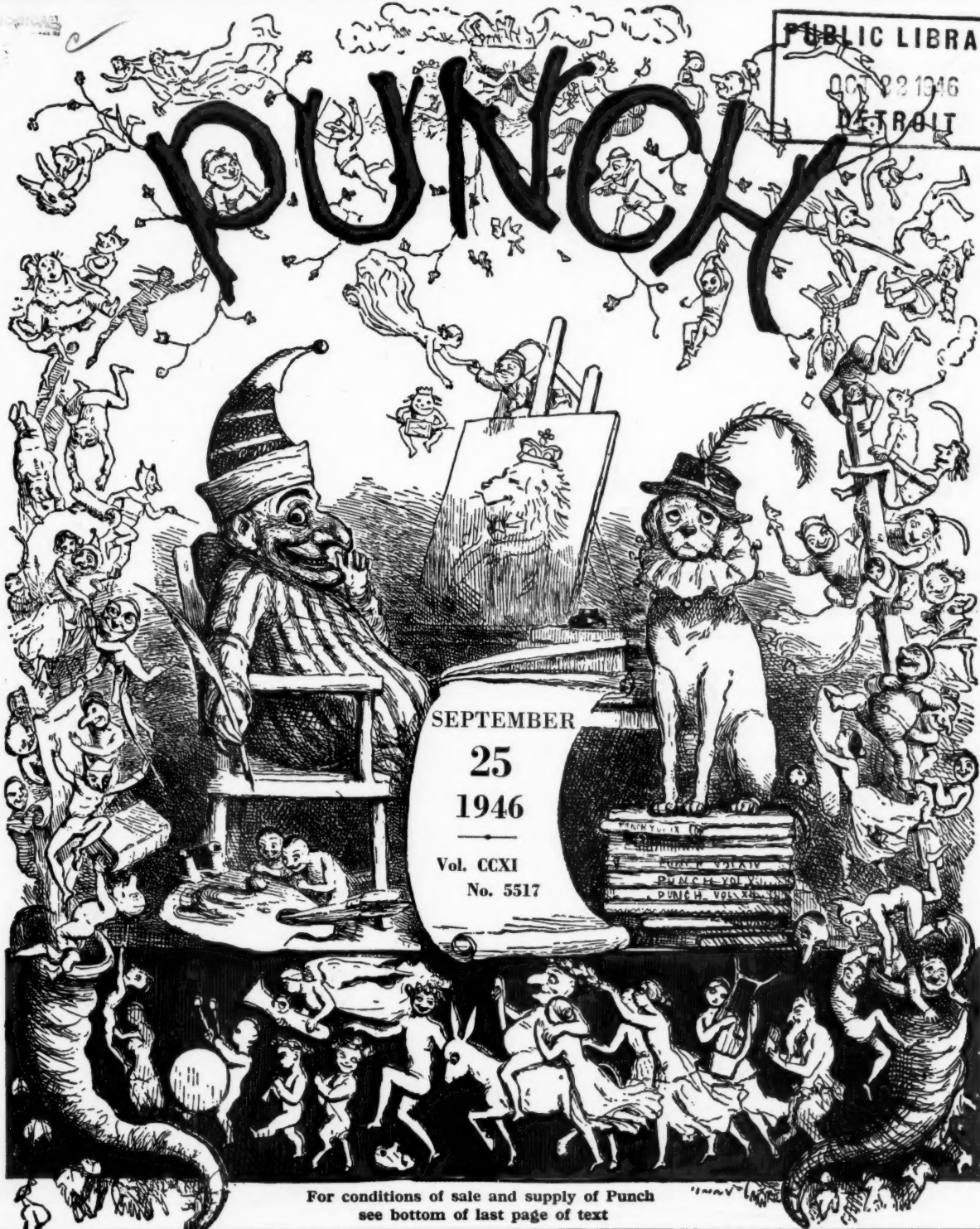


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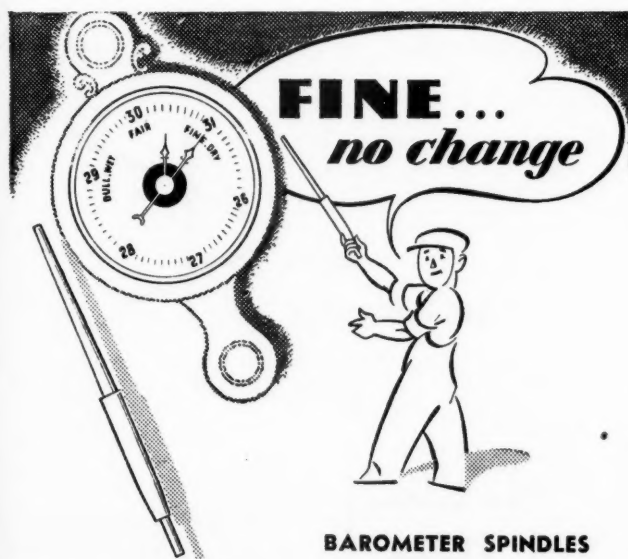
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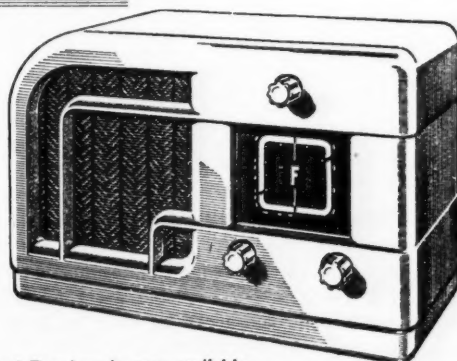
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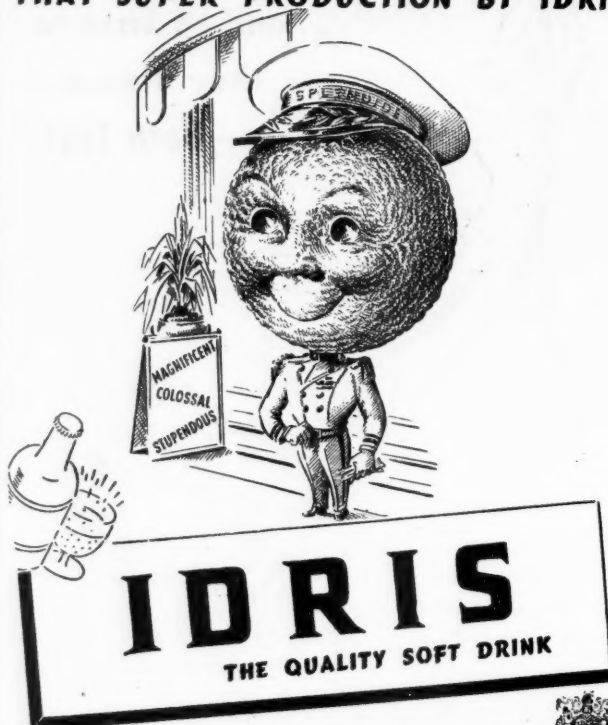


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PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXI No. 5517

September 25 1946

Charivaria

DEHYDRATED rhubarb has not been a success. When reconstituted it is too much like the real thing.

A correspondent in a contemporary wants to know why fresh pilchards are thrown back into the sea when we are importing tinned pilchards from America. Obviously because housewives must have something in exchange for the points they get in exchange for unwanted BU's.



You can now obtain the newspaper of your choice on a firm order only. That is, if you are master at your own breakfast-table.

Claims that their dogs can talk have now been made by five owners in various parts of Europe. Assuming that one of them can say "No," the animals could run a Peace Conference of their own.

"In my submission the Government should strive to stem the rising tide of inflation by grasping the nettle and attempting to freeze wage rates."—Letter to "Yorkshire Post."

Canute never thought of that.

"Stop smoking this easy way," invites an advertisement. Just stroll into your tobacconist's and ask for some cigarettes.

Sir Ben Smith has been made Chairman of the West Midlands Division of the Fuel Board. This seems to be out of the frying-pan into the fire.

A famous film actress entered a London cinema but was unrecognized in the dark. An usherette did, we understand, shine a torch on her face, but it was no more than a mere flash in the pan.

A pipe bursting in a brewery caused a flood of beer. The loss was serious as the liquid was still in a concentrated form prior to being broken down for human consumption.

"FLIES TO HAVE BABY
IN BRITAIN"
"Daily Mirror."
Not if D.D.T. can stop it.



A Scottish pipe-major thinks the English really like the bagpipes. Even the most bigoted admit that the bagpipes are quite all right if people will only leave them alone.

A writer complains that there are no great centres of learning and culture left in the world to-day. The producers of the various Radio Quiz Programmes will resent this.

Impending Apology

"HOME offered in pretty Country Cottage to Lady or Gentleman, teacher or slight mental not objected to."

Advt. in "The Irish Times."

"Onions should be left out in the open to dry before being stored for the winter," says a gardening article. Yes, but what does one do in this country?

As we go to press the Printing Trade dispute has not yet been settled, and in consequence our production is still curtailed. As soon as there is a settlement of the dispute larger-sized issues will be published to make compensation for what has been lost.

A Frontier Dispute

CAN anybody tell me, in a few simple, dignified and well-chosen words, the various names by which in different parts of this island the bilberry is called, the bilberry being that rather silly little sweet black fruit, with a kind of bluish dust on it, that grows on moors, and when it is squashed covers the face and fingers with a messy stain, and the children are sent upstairs to wash, and you can make jam of it, or stew it, or eat it in pies?

I am aware that this is a side issue in world politics at the present time. There is plenty of unrest about other and perhaps more important delimitations of territory. Trieste is on the tapis. Discontent is seething in Middle Europe and the Middle East. Trouble exists in India, and in Rangoon—if I may trust the *New Times of Burma*—the police are out on strike. U Wan Maung, presiding at a meeting of the malcontents, has issued the following statement to the local press:

"APPEAL TO BAD-HATS

We, the members of the Rangoon City Police, make this strong appeal on behalf of Burma to all self-centred individual bad-hats and members of dacoit-gangs to consider the welfare of the country and by way of supporting our cause, to keep the peace and to refrain from committing crimes during the period in which we are engaged in a demonstration to secure a status equivalent to that enjoyed by the police forces in all free countries.

All are specially warned that if this appeal is disregarded, we will take the most severe and drastic action either when we resume our duties according to our rank and station or when we become ordinary citizens if Government will not receive us back."

This is a very serious position. For a moment it may seem to take us rather far from the bilberry, but it serves, I think, to show us the state of uncertainty from which the world is suffering, and the bilberry crisis, as I find myself compelled to call it, seems to be but another symptom of the universal and deep-seated *malaise*.

One of our book-reviewers made the rather bold statement a few weeks ago that in the north of England the bilberry is always known as the whinberry. The writer of the book about bilberries (or perhaps only in part about bilberries) replied that in Northumberland the bilberry is called the blaeberry. To this our reviewer rather acidly replied that the bilberry is only called the blaeberry in Scotland, and that for the purpose of bilberry-naming, Northumberland is geographically included in the Lowlands of Scotland.

In an attempt to prevent bloodshed, and reconcile the disputants, I consulted all the dictionaries that I could lay hands on, and wrote out a brief summary of the wisdom of the ages, a bilberiography as you might say of the whole theme:

<i>Blaeberry</i>	The English bilberry
<i>Bilberry</i>	The whortleberry
<i>Whortleberry</i>	See bilberry
<i>Whinberry or Whimberry</i>	Obs. and Dial., the bilberry
<i>Whimberry</i>	The cowberry

I began then to feel annoyed. I summoned to my room a man whom I understood to have a fair working knowledge of fruit.

"Do you know any other names for the bilberry?" I asked.

"In Surrey," he said, "we call them hurts."

"Please go away," I said.

I asked the office to put me through to the Curator of Kew Gardens. The ruse was a failure. Kew Gardens are much too cunning and cowardly to be on the telephone.

I got in touch with Covent Garden. This great and justly famed market could shed no light on the affair.

Finally, hot with rage, I rang up the Ministry of Food. "Put me through to the bilgeberry department," I said. There was none.

It may seem to the reader an extraordinary thing, at a time when we are on the eve of one of the worst harvests we have known for many a long year, when one would have expected that all spare labour that could have been diverted from the barley and the wheat would be employed in gargle gathering for the winter preserves, there was not a single official who could tell me what was being done about the warberry, or whether a single bulberry had been picked at all from John o' Groats to Land's End. But so it was.

I made further inquiries, but the fog only seemed to deepen around me. So far as I can ascertain the thing is called a bottleberry in Suffolk and a glueberry on the borders of Wales. I saw myself pursuing a marsh fire or Jack o' Lantern over the waste lands of Britain, grasping vainly at a phantom fruit. It would appear that as one grazes quietly over the heaths of the Heptarchy one may raise a purple face and suddenly find oneself in an alien and hostile land. The burberry on which one has been carelessly feeding has been suddenly altered into the hartleberry or the whoop. I became more and more angry with the utter confusion which prevailed. How idle, I thought, to follow world peace as an aim when even the local boundaries of our own burbleberry are the subject of acrimonious dispute!

It was impossible, I discovered, to raise the issue in any company without bitter dissension, and causing angry birds to wurtle to and fro.

It is for this reason that I am asking whether any kindly reader will step into the arena and help me to determine the precise zones, regions, habitats, and corresponding variations of nomenclature of this pestilential little drupe.

EVOR.

Child by the Sea

ABOUT three, I suppose,
On the very edge of the pale grey sea
Jumping, flatfooted for splashes,
On each little curling wave
And laughing in ecstasy.
Starfish hands stiff with excitement,
Limp silk hair blowing across her eyes
Unnoticed. All the world lost.
Her bathing drawers (courtesy garment)
Are damp and low about her thighs,
The small brown body naked to the skies.
Complete absorption in the task at hand:
To jump on every curling wave
Just as it breaks upon the sand.

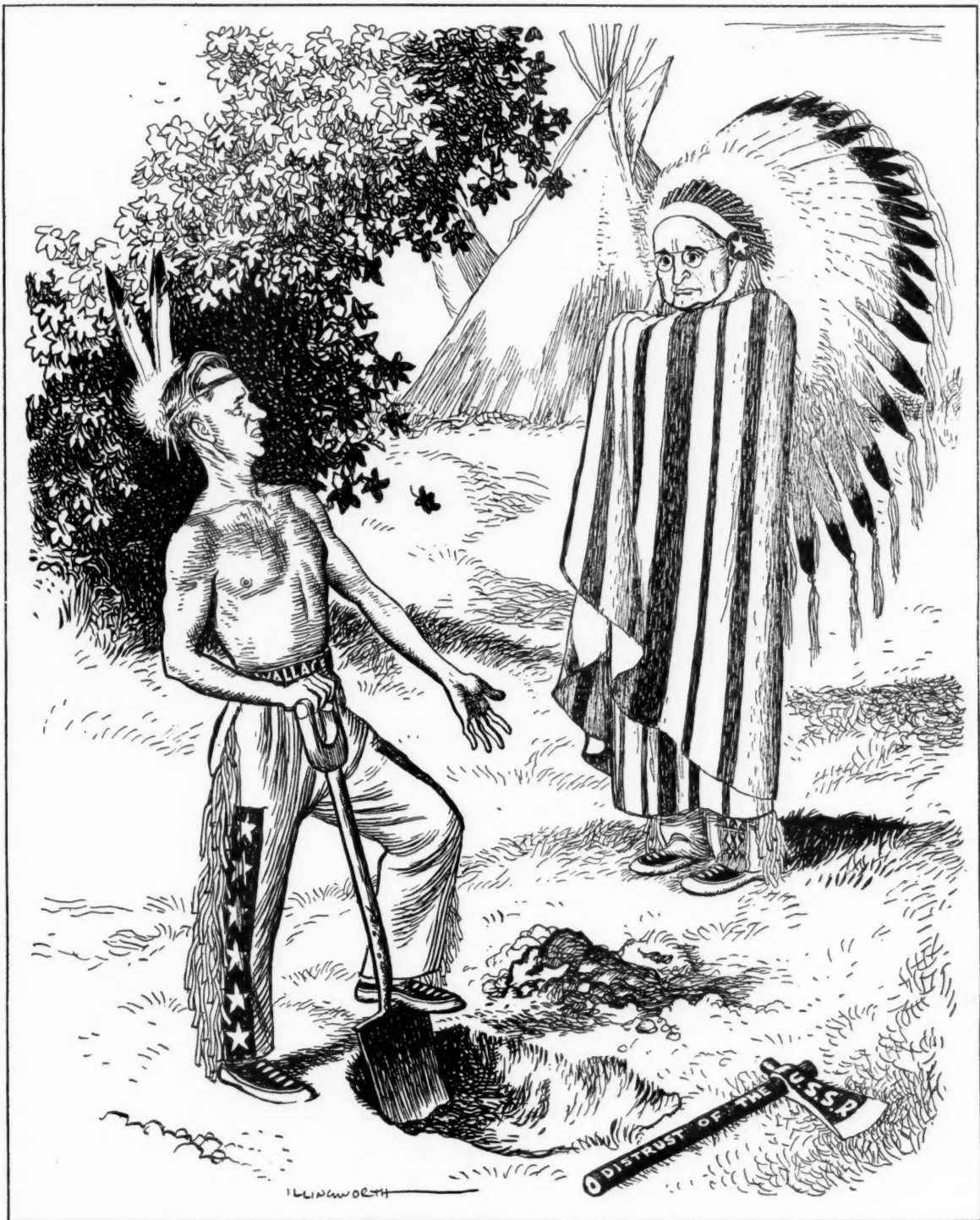
"Coo-oo, come back, it's time for tea."

No response,

Only a new interest,

Stones for throwing at the sea.

J. G.



WASHINGTON WALLACE

"Truman, I cannot tell a lie. I intended to bury your little hatchet."



"Hello, Smith!—got a minute to join me for a coffee?"

Defence of the Home Act (Winter, 1946-47)

THE following notice has been posted up in the hall:

1. Failure of Gas.

In the event of failure of gas, procedure will be on the lines laid down for the preceding winter, 1945-46.

Portable electric fires may be laid on their backs on the kitchen floor, but no attempt will be made to carry out this manoeuvre in the sitting- or dining-rooms owing to scorching of carpets observed in previous campaigning seasons.

John will run to Mrs. Bartholomew's for her spare electric toaster.

There will be no panic. REMEMBER, if we all run out into the road trying to borrow electrical apparatus, Wellington Crescent will become hopelessly blocked and no one will be able to borrow anything. THE ORDER IS STAY PUT, except as instructed above.

The gas will be taken to have failed when a kettle, placed on No. 2 ring, emits no steam after thirty minutes with the controls set at maximum.

2. Failure of Electricity.

A new form of attack against which we must prepare ourselves is the cutting off of our supply of electricity. THERE MAY BE NO WARNING. We cannot rely upon our light bulbs becoming dim or beginning to flicker in advance of the total black-out. In all probability we shall be plunged instantaneously into complete darkness.

By day no special action will be taken except to leave, in an orderly fashion, any room normally heated by electric fires and concentrate in the sitting-room where a coal fire will be kept permanently laid and even, whenever the fuel situation permits, lit.

By night the following drill will be carried out without fail:

(a) Immediately the lights go out, STAND STILL.

(b) The Head of the House will now call the roll in order and in a loud voice. All members of the household will answer their names by indicating their whereabouts, e.g., "Bathroom," "Halfway up stairs," etc., and will report in addition any circumstances of particular interest, as, for example, that they are not properly dry or are holding a tray full of old cut-glass decanters.

(c) The Head of the House will then make a rapid appreciation and will decide which members of the household are in a position, with the least danger to themselves and others,

(i) to observe the street lamps

(ii) to reach the hall table.

(d) He will now call by name upon the persons selected by him

(i) to report whether the failure appears to be General or Local.

(ii) to light the candle which will at all times be kept, with matches attached by string, on the hall table.

(e) Immediately the candle has been lit it will be put at the disposal of the person who, in the opinion of the Head of the House, is in most urgent need of light, and thereafter it will be used to locate any other candles that may be available in the house.

(f) Warmth will be obtained as by day. (It is hoped, later, to secure a gas fire and a length of rubber tubing sufficient to run from the kitchen stove to the sitting-room, in order to guard against the possibility of there being no coal on the premises at a time when the electric fires fail. Should it be possible to arrange this, civilian gas-masks will be worn as a precautionary measure.)

Note.—It must be understood that, in addition to lighting and heating, the following apparatus will be out of action during electrical famines:

The vacuum cleaner

The wireless

The electric bells.

It is not believed that the telephone will necessarily cease to work, though it is of course known to be electrically-powered and may, for all that is known at this address, depend on the same source of supply as the vacuum cleaner.

No particular action is called for by the information given in this note, except that it would be a kindness if (by day only) John would attach an "Out of Order" notice to the front-door bell. This will be a convenience to neighbours calling to inquire whether our wireless has stopped too.

3. Failure of Gas AND Electricity.

Two-pronged attacks are almost certain during the coming winter. We must not be taken by surprise. Orders have therefore been given that the windows of my dressing-room be sealed up forthwith with strips of brown paper and a heavy draught-proof curtain be hung permanently over the door. Oil-lamps, paraffin stoves and small cookers powered by methylated spirit will be assembled in this room from every possible quarter and carefully guarded. THEY MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO FALL INTO NEIGHBOURS' HANDS.

On the order "Total blockade," the whole family will retire into this stronghold and will keep the door shut. Permission to open the door for purposes of egress may be

obtained from the Head of the House during spells of mild weather.

4. Failure of All Sources of Supply.

Simultaneous strikes of milk distributors, meat porters, bakers, laundrymen, etc., coinciding with the total breakdown of all sources of heat, light and power, will be difficult to counter. Special instructions will be issued *ad hoc* to meet each new situation as it arises. But WE SHALL NEVER GIVE IN. Remembering what we have been through together in the past, and strong in the possession of seventeen tins of sardines and an intolerable quantity of dried milk, we shall tighten our belts, draw in our horns, slip on an extra pullover and await what looks like being an unusually bitter end.

All other considerations apart, there is no one to whom we can surrender.

H. F. E.

"LOOK, DADDY!"



At the Pictures

DIFFERENT WORLDS

EVEN if *Theirs is the Glory* (Director: BRIAN DESMOND HURST) were badly done, even if it were anything short of very well done, it would require considerable effrontery in a critic to say so; for this is the great story of Arnhem, and only that tiny fraction of the public capable of the detachment necessary to consider manner apart from matter would grasp the fact that a captious or lukewarm notice was not disparaging the magnificent action itself. Happily the film is very well done, though I will take the risk of saying it isn't perfect. A straightforward reconstruction of the facts, every incident having been "either experienced or witnessed by the people who appear in the film," it has the disadvantages as well as the advantages of such careful authenticity; one disadvantage being that what is actually happening is sometimes as confusing to us as it must have been to the hard-pressed, exhausted men who were fighting. Another slight disadvantage is the natural, occasionally noticeable stiffness of unpractised players, in small close-up scenes.

But as a whole the film is a triumph for what John Grierson calls "the national talent for emotional understatement"; at least it is certain to be a triumph with British audiences. I shall be interested to hear how it goes in the U.S., where they don't appreciate understatement and where (for instance) to show an Airborne man on the way to violent and heroic action opening a Sunday paper and observing with casual interest "No Nat Gubbins this week, Sarge"—where such a perfectly genuine and natural sign of nonchalance, which most of us could parallel on a smaller scale from our own or our friends' experience, may seem an irritating example of English irresponsibility. (I always remember some paragraphs in an American magazine in 1940 which

described with what seemed to be disgust and annoyance the way London comic papers continued to make their trivial little jokes even though their city was being bombed to pieces.)

But never mind that. *Theirs is the*

different world, almost a different dimension), if anything at all makes you see *Night and Day* (Director: MICHAEL CURTIZ) it will be, presumably, COLE PORTER's music. One of these days they'll do an enormous

Technicolor biography of a man whose music isn't strong enough to carry it, and the flop will be deafening. Some of these musical biographies are more or less deafening already, but *Night and Day* isn't one of them—unless perhaps you're sitting very close to the screen when CARLOS RAMIREZ is crying "Myke them plye!" in "Begin the Beguine." No, the unavoidable trouble here is that the story is too subdued, being compounded of a great many musical-biography clichés some of which we saw used only a short while ago in the same company's picture about Gershwin. The music-shop piano-playing—the crowd that collects, by instinct, for the new tune that will



PEGASUS 1944

[*Theirs is the Glory*]

Glory is a fine record of a very great occasion, and nothing should prevent your seeing it.

On the other hand (to come down with a bump to a different plane, a

be a success—the bad luck in the first show—the success summed up by the posters reading "2ND YEAR"—the expensive parties, the sad wife—and finally, that favourite "You're overworking-yourself" situation . . .

But, as always, the music is the important thing: the music, and the often superlatively well handled concerted numbers that present it and illustrate it.

CARY GRANT walks through the part of Cole Porter without difficulty, and MONTY WOOLLEY cheers things up a good deal by playing the part of *Monty Woolley*—getting one of his biggest laughs with a crack that was first made well over a hundred years ago by Lamb. The ladies are headed by ALEXIS SMITH, as the sad wife, and GINNY SIMS, who has to do a lot of singing done in real life by Ethel Merman and is made up to look something like Miss Merman; but she is allowed a fictitious name. If the other principals had been given fictitious names the story would (I gather) have been less misleading, for its implications about Mr. PORTER's early life, and his family's attitude, and his marriage, are quite unjustified by fact. R. M.



[*Night and Day*]

ADDENDUM—TO FILM MUSICAL BIOGRAPHY

Lucid Interval

IT is my custom to admonish children who chalk things on public highways, but this little cherub intrigued me. His features, of almost cloying sweetness, reminded me forcibly of a photo I still have of my own childhood. I stooped and saw, chalked on the pavement, the words—"DADDY IS." We mused over this in silence for a while.

"Well, go on," I beamed at last, patting his head. "What follows?"

Without answering, he began chalking what appeared to be a design for some ill-assorted filigree work. I intervened firmly.

"Come now; one thing at a time," I chided. "You have written 'Daddy is.' Add something—say an adjective."

He got up and tried to escape, but I took him by the hand and led him back. He began to whimper, and several passers-by stopped to listen.

"What is daddy?" I persisted. "Surely you know? You can't leave it like that."

"Who can't?" asked a man with a red scarf truculently. "He *has* left it, ain't he? Writ very nice too."

"But it doesn't make sense," I objected. "My point is—"

"Don't talk to me about sense," he interrupted loudly, tapping my chest. "What about coal?"

"I'm not concerned with coal—" I began testily.

"You ought to be then," sniffed another member of the fast-gathering crowd. "Look at the gas strike."

"Don't talk to me about the gas strike," shouted the red-scarfed man, turning on the last speaker. "What about milk?"

That, roughly, was how the whole thing started. When the policeman arrived we were holding a stormy overflow meeting in the road.

"What is all this here?" asked the policeman sternly.

"Just a friendly discussion," came a voice.

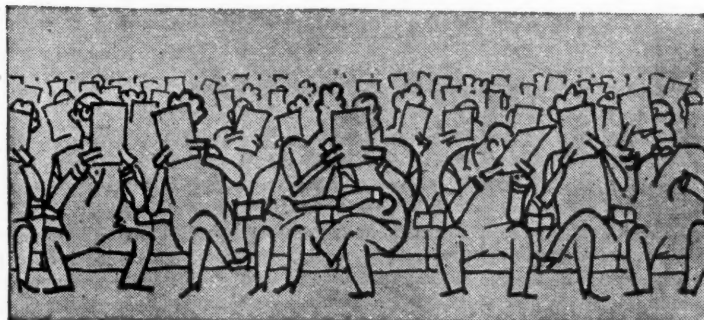
"Don't talk to me about friendly discussions," roared the red scarf. "What about the peace conference?"

"I can explain, officer," I said with dignity. "It's perfectly simple. I came across a small boy chalking 'Daddy is' on the pavement."

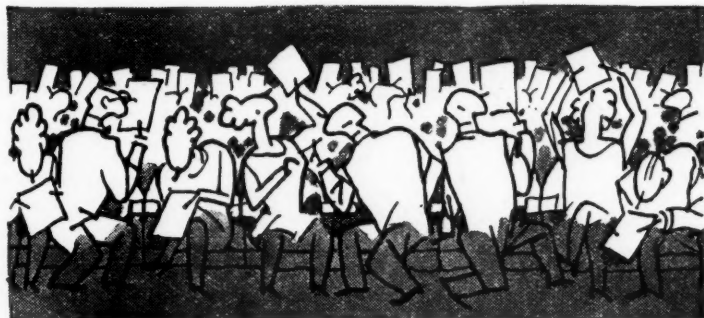
"Daddy—is—on the pavement," repeated the policeman, noting it down.

"No. Let me put it another way," I said. "Written on the pavement was 'Daddy is.'"

We used to read our programmes while waiting for the curtain's rise;



nowadays we have to wait—



until the curtain's risen.

"Daddy is what?" he asked suspiciously.

"That is exactly the point I was trying to make with this little boy," I explained.

"What little boy?"

The boy had gone. Fortunately the policeman then had to leave me to deal with a scuffle, and I threaded my way out of the crowd. On its fringe I ran into the boy, who pointed me out to his mother.

"Are you the man who's been telling my boy to write on pavements?" she demanded indignantly.

"I was merely explaining to him that—"

"You leave him alone," she shouted. The crowd began to envelop us. "I won't have him writing on pavements; I don't hold with it."

"Nor do I, but—"

"What did you tell him to for then?"

"My whole point was—" I began patiently.

"And what about the housing question?" demanded the man with the red scarf, who had just joined us.

"Pray keep out of this," I said to him severely.

"How dare you!" exclaimed the mother to me hotly. "That's the boy's father, and my husband."

"Don't talk to me about husbands!" thundered red scarf. "What about wives?"

I decided that this was about the right moment to go home. It was a great pity. All I wanted to say was that children should be encouraged to finish whatever they undertake. It builds character and develops a tendency towards consecutive thought.

Furthermore, as soon as I can find a piece of chalk I am going back to fill in what daddy is.



"Why, dammit, when I was your age I'd think up a name and go round paging it just for practice . . ."

Dulce Domum

or The Return to School

THE thrice-let-out pyjamas have been patched,
The ninety-seventh name-tape has been sewn,
The trunk and bicycle have been dispatched,
And I can call my dressing-room my own.

My desk is *inter alia* relieved
Of model aircraft, birds' eggs and a tent;
The Bechstein too is fleetingly reprieved
From further coats of balsa-wood cement.

Now shall the commissariat recoup
The deep erosion that the boy has made.
Free from his practised predatory scoop
The rest of us may touch some marmalade.

No longer need the little sister use
The rigid litany of School House slang—
May play at least *some* games that do not bruise
And let such things as "toughening-up" go hang.

Workmen will come to mend the garden gate,
Replace the tiles and paint the several walls;
The greenhouse will, no doubt, recuperate
From regularly accidental balls.

There comes to me (but instantly forgot)
A traitorous, subversive thought—i.e.,
That boarding schools, although their bills are hot,
May yet be not unworthy of their fee.

Facts

I EXPECT my readers will have noticed that readers generally—that is, ordinary people—are supposed nowadays to be very keen on facts, or information. (It may be that they always were; statisticians say you get poor results in any branch of statistics if you start thinking like that.) Well, this article is going to be given up entirely to facts, and, what is more, to facts my readers know perfectly well already, which I hope will make it all the more interesting.

What, I wonder, would my readers like to start off with? Dry cleaners? This is a subtle way of saying that that is exactly what I am starting off with—a few facts about those shops which are so indispensable a part of modern life and which vary in their outward appearance from a row of other people's clothes to a bunch of artificial flowers and a notice on a little easel. The most noteworthy fact about dry cleaners is of course that your clothes come back to you with a cloth tab sewn on somewhere. This cloth tab, which has inked on it a row of figures that mean nothing beyond the thought that someone cared that much about us, interests psychologists as a test of fecklessness. They say that if we knew how many people unpick these tabs immediately, however much they don't show, we should be quite ashamed and more determined than ever not to leave them on until the clothes are ready for the cleaners again. Another fact about dry cleaners is that when human nature fetches its clothes back over the counter nowadays it is pretty well bound to hear itself saying how nice and clean they are. Psychologists add that this does not necessarily mean that human nature has changed, it just means that nowadays human nature fetches its dry-cleaned clothes back unwrapped and feels it has to say something when it sees them.

I think a few facts about table-cloths would fit in here as well as anywhere. It is a highly theoretical fact that if a table-cloth put on straight only just covers a tea-table, then put on diagonally it will leave the corners bare. I mean, no table-layer worth the name will take such a fact on trust, but will reach it by much twiddling and flapping. Psychologists, by the way, define table-layers as loyal to a fault, because if these kindly people cannot hide the tea-stain any other way they will put it under a plate where they think one of the family will be sitting but where, actually, the chief visitor will inevitably be placed, and will therefore get the knife with the bit out of the handle as well. Table-cloths with coloured patterns count as patterned, or difficult to arrange in relation to all four sides of the table, and those with white patterns, usually large invisible roses, get through life like watermarked notepaper, unnoticed except by the very observant or the very preoccupied.

My readers have had a lot of food facts largely from the Government, but I should like to give one or two more. First, sausages. Apart from sausage jokes, their main feature is that they are joined together in either twos or fours—statisticians say they will check up which next time they have sausages—and that tradition has it that if sausage-fryers prick them with a fork they will not burst the way they do whether they are pricked or not. The trouble with sausage-pricking is that it cannot be done with the average fork until the sausage is cooked enough to have burst already, and that anyway it is only when sausages burst that their fryers remember they should have pricked them. I do not need to remind my readers of the small tight sausage's tendency to ooze out at each end of



"... and mind you don't get a sting or a chill or an appetite or anything."

its skin and stick to the pan, or of any sausage's tendency, when jiggled, to roll back on to its overdone side again. Baked apples can burst as positively as sausages but are a bit more popular when they do, the oven-watcher taking it as a sign that the household will not have to wait for its pudding like last time. There is furthermore an eager, polished look about the unburst part of a burst baked apple which is very pleasant to oven-watchers, who have probably already had the satisfaction of digging at the core with the potato-peeler and coming out at the South Pole. I should like also to mention spinach for its dwindling powers, Welsh rarebits for the wrong way in which it is so easy to make them, and coffee for its two schools of thought, percolator *v.* saucepan. Psychologists like coffee arguments because they never get anywhere; they usually begin because the people who make it by one method are drinking coffee made in someone else's house by another method, so that the whole thing is inextricably confused with politeness from the start.

Turning from food to entertainment, I want to deal now with something which has always puzzled human nature: the fact that people on the stage and in the films are always so well-dressed, good-looking and generally so fearfully tidy. I don't really mean that human nature is puzzled by this, but it feels more intelligent if it says it is. Psychologists say that it is too late now for such a convention to change, because if anyone appeared on a stage or in a film looking ordinary—by which I mean anything from wanting ironing to wearing five different colours—such a person would need a special mention for looking extraordinary or the audience would think the management was economizing. Anyway, audiences are used to this convention by now, and get along very well by remembering that they are not looking at real life. Another fact worth noting about the entertainment world is that if you

take a big shiny magazine and compare all the drawings illustrating one story you will find that every person looks awfully like everyone else but that the same person, say the heroine, is quite difficult to identify from drawing to drawing. I would ask my readers to use their benevolence here and to imagine themselves drawing a lot of people all quite different, and then two people exactly alike. I don't believe they would make a better job of it.

I wonder if my readers would be interested in a few facts about brief-cases? I am sure the ones with brief-cases would, and a great many people seem to have them now. Sociologists—making the typically pedantic reservation that we should remind ourselves that brief-cases are so called because originally they carried briefs—are in favour of this fashion because it is efficient; they are also interested to note that at a certain stage in a brief-case's life its owner ceases to mean to polish it, this stage coming some time later than the stage of ceasing to polish it. Sociologists note also that if the side-straps are not fastened they gradually curl up, and they say that the owners periodically note this too and have a day or so of strap-fastening before they go back to just jabbing the middle catch down. And, finally, sociologists would like while they have the chance to weigh in with a fact they think rather shows human nature for what it is: the fact that the people who blow their sweet ration on the first Monday of the rationing month are as inclined to boast about it as the people who save theirs till the last Saturday.

Bold as Brass

"Guilt-edged, however, continued to present a firm front and prices in this section remained steady."—*Evening paper.*

"Most of us have memories of the theatre that are memorable."
Daily paper.

But the memories one can't remember are always the best.





"Mummy, it's leaking."

Mr. Mackenzie

WE learnt about Mr. Mackenzie in the flat above, because when he moved in he started almost at once to play his violin.

He began, at seven, by playing some Bach, so we knew he was serious, and then he stopped, for dinner I suppose, which wasn't so very mysterious; but you see at eight, he foxed us a bit by playing the "Caprice Viennoise." We didn't know *what* to make of it.

At 8.30 we knew he was industrious because he practised his scales, and then suddenly he played Wales! Wa—les! So odd! We decided, erroneously, he was Welsh.

At nine we knew he was in love. The Chopin nocturne sounded quite different; rather as though he were wearing a woolly glove—all muffled and tender, a little mawkish really, but when he began to play Debussy, we realized that tho' he might be in love, he was also gay. And intelligent—yes, he sounded very intelligent. But it wasn't until ten or thereabouts, when Mr. Mackenzie hit a piercing high note, and having hung on to it for hours hurled himself like a cataract into boogie woogie, that we knew, for certain, Mr. Mackenzie was young. V. G.

THE RUINED CHURCHES

LONDON without her churches would not be London. Yet to-day, of 701 churches in the diocese, 624 are but empty shells or piles of rubble. To reconstruct the church-life of London, 50 churches must be rebuilt (not in all cases on the same sites), 500 be repaired, 35 new churches be begun. For this great task the Bishop of London's £750,000 Appeal was launched, and to-day, September 25th, which is set apart as the "Day of Gifts," when the Bishop and his Suffragans are receiving donations at St. Paul's Cathedral, Londoners in particular are asked to give what they can to help. Donations (made payable to "The Bishop of London's Church Appeal") should be sent to the Appeal Organizer, 33, Bedford Square, W.C.1.



THE RUINED CHURCHES

"Who will rebuild after this Great Fire?"



"They say this fellow Alfred wants to nationalize the Navy."

Normandy, 1946

V

THE lane which goes from Bayeux to Arromanches winds through rolling wooded country giving no suggestion that the sea is near. The stains of war are almost absent. Great stone barns, probably built by Matilda, flank the way, utterly imperishable; and as the sun, which for once has a visa, strikes their mossy walls they turn a lovely soft gold. I pause only for a life-saving cider at a little *buvette* which still has "COY. OFFICE" painted on the kitchen door and where everything is in a state of extreme scrubbery owing to the impending confirmation of the daughter of the house. There will be many *invités*, says the *patronne*, feverishly wiping the green table under the plane-tree with her apron, and no doubt I know what

that means. . . . I begin to wonder if my map is lying or the sea has moved on somewhere else when the lane dips unexpectedly and there at my feet in all their fantastic absurdity are those oddest fruits of war, the mulberries. The port has been described often enough; now the landing piers are gone, but the semi-circle of concrete hulls, looking like children's bricks, is still in position. A large tramp with smoking funnels is alongside, out towards the middle of the arc, and a Dukw is chugging towards her across the lagoon. I saw the port from the air when it was in full swing, but it is far more impressive from the ground, even now in its decline. The sheer size of the thing stuns you.

Arromanches is the smallest sort of

seaside place, with a tiny front, a compact village and a few family hotels. It is impossible to believe what vast events it has survived. The church is intact, the village nearly so, and the front, though battered, is still a front. To one side of it, just above the beach, there is a stone with bright blue flowers round it which says:

"ARROMANCHES-LES-BAINS
PORT WINSTON

D'ici sont parties les Troupes
Alliées pour la libération de
la France—6 Juin 1944"

It is beautiful in its simplicity, matching to perfection the breath-taking simplicity of the whole mulberry conception. A leader's genius has surely

never had a more dramatic memorial, worth all the fat bronzes on horses in the rest of the world put together.

The beach, covered with French families at play, looks like a place where metal mastodons have gone to die. Huge rusting carcasses sprawl everywhere. I drape my effects modestly over the skeleton of a landing-barge and wade a long way out into the shallow lagoon. From water-level the mulberries appear more than ever like a giant's nursery-game.

UN ELEPHANT AVALE UN
PORTEFEUILLE

L'Humanité

Lunch, in a paved garden. The barelegged waitress wants to know what the stocking position is like in England and seems greatly cheered when I tell her. In this nice little hotel the daily *pension* is about a pound all up, which for these days of an inflating franc is very honest... After lunch I sun-bathe among the mastodons, and have another swim, and browse over a great many picture-post cards of the landing, and observe the *Restaurant Mulberry* to be already born; and then I walk home to Bayeux. On the way occurs one of my bi-annual adventures with a bull. It is an outsize bull, pretty well filling the lane, and it lumbers at me in a highly carnivorous manner, bellowing titanically. I do what any prudent man would have done and back into a gateway, fumbling with my shoes in case anyone is watching. Fortunately someone is. A woman comes out of the field and asks me, before I have time to lodge a protest about her bull, if I would mind holding the gate open while she recovers her cow. Viewed in this light the animal looks perceptibly smaller and its ferocity now seems, I admit, tinged with distress. For the sake of British prestige in these parts I slap its rump cordially as it goes past.

It is thirsty work tramping back to Bayeux and I am glad when the cathedral (am I wrong in thinking it disappointing inside?) pokes through the trees; and even gladder when at last I am sitting at a table commanding Main Street. This is perhaps the moment to break to you the lamentable state of the *apéritif-front* in France. Those high-octane fatigue-erasers, such as *Pernod* and *Amer Picon*, which used to blunt life's sharper edges so decisively, are still absent. Have they fallen in the fray?

In their stead reign only usurpers from the category of half-hearted lung-tonics. I am sipping one of these thoughtfully when there is a tap on my shoulder, and I now have the following extraordinary conversation with a lady. She has beautiful china-blue eyes but the anxious look of a conspirator:

She (hissing). Anglais?

Myself (also hissing). Indubitablement.

She (still hissing). Cigarettes?

Myself (now hissing madly). Three Caporals, rather bent.

She (narrowing her eyes). I have seven children.

Myself (narrowing mine). Life can be vastly cruel.

She. It is impossible to keep them clean.

Myself. Chez nous we have given up trying.

She (hissing again). No soap?

Myself (an emptying siphon). Scarcely enough for the bare necessities. Suis en rucsac.

She (opening wide her pretty eyes). Helas!

Myself (doing much the same). Helack!

ERIC.

Prometheus, R.E.

"TO my father," said the Garrison Engineer, after the orderly had half demolished the anteroom fire in his attempt to stoke it, "trimming a fire is a ceremony, a ritual where self is submerged in performance, like Menuhin absorbed in a concerto. He will place the scuttle on the hearth—my father, I mean, not the violinist—pull out the damper and study the fire, making what you infantry fellows call an appreciation, and then open the offensive with the poker, probing into corners, prising out the clinker, raking loose the ashes, and all done with a delicate touch that never shakes the big red body of it all an' all. To see him then is to see a craftsman at work. Crouched in front of the grate... and if criticism were permitted it would be that his beam-end thrusts blankly into the room like a blimp moored in a hangar doorway, but with art one sees beyond the materialistic. After all, if Titian wore a dirty smock or Beethoven snuffled, was their genius impaired?"

"But to return. Selecting small lumps, my father fits them into the red face of the fire, like a jeweller setting stones in a diadem, easing a lump in here, widening a gap there,

careful never to create a black-faced phalanx of fuel but leaving a crimson chasm between the nuggets. And, gentlemen, all done with bare hands and poker. No fire-tongs for him, despite the pleas and complaints of the family. This mechanical age, he says, has left little enough for the hands to fashion, and metal pincers can never hope to equal the finesse of sensitive fingers in placing a piece of coal just so. After all, does a dentist extract a tooth with an automatic puller? And he'll crack a black diamond in his hand to the exact size like Michaelangelo working on a bust of the King of Ethiopia.

"When finally he straightens up and goes to wash, the masterpiece is revealed. Firmed down, it slopes back like the curve of a hill studded with dark boulders, offering a warm, friendly front to the room, a sort of rubicund Argus with a hundred black eyes. And this is the magic of it. You turn away to light a cigarette or read the paper for five minutes and when next you glance at the hearth a metamorphosis has begun. The fire-devils have launched the attack.

"From those crimson chasms a recee party moves out. From this gap here the blue flame-cap of one flickers up, spies around and drops back to report. Up he thrusts again, gets an elbow on a chunk of coal and leaps lightly out, bending down to call up others. From another crevice a red devil pops up, takes fright and dodges back again, and half a minute passes before his orange-tipped spear flashes out again. And so the attack proceeds, and soon the black bastions are encompassed by dozens of devils, dancing and reeling in a dizzy victory dance. Others of their kind, a sort of sapper, are driving into the roots of their victims, and when a crimson corona wreathes the base of each coal, defeat is overwhelming. Ah, gentlemen, what a sight on a winter's night! A well-built fire coming to maturity, dispensing warmth and cosiness in a matter of minutes, and all because a master touch has fed it and set it on the right course."

Enthralled by his words we had scarcely heeded his actions, but now that he ceased and moved from the hearth his efforts spoke for themselves. From a pile of nigger-coloured nuggets, a cairn of coal shrouded in smoke, his poker and inherited artistry had fashioned a rockery of black roses edged with crimson petals where blue fairies swayed and flickered in a dance of intricate pyrotechnique, forever ember.

We voted G.E. senior a great man.

What a Word!

I GIVE rather low marks to the following letter. It was sent by the Ministry of —, and is probably an Official Secret, so we must be careful:

"DEAR SIRs,—We thank you for yours of the 23rd August but regret that owing to machines *anticipated* not *materializing* we are unfortunately not able to offer at the moment, any machines.

"However, your name has been put on the list and as soon as any *develop* we will *advise* you accordingly.

Yours faithfully,

For Director of —"

We are all so drugged with bad language to-day that even you, Bobby, may not be shocked.

Let me then "pedantically" remark that the machines were not "anticipated" but "expected" and that machines do not "materialize"; and though they may "develop" that is not the right word here. Nor do the best Ministries say "advise you accordingly" when they mean "let you know" or "write again."

THE DEAD LANGUAGES

Another Ministry has distributed this:

"In paragraph 3 of the notice G.1569 relating to change of Supplies nominations. In line 1 the words 'arrangements have been made', should read 'arrangements will be made': and in line 4 the words 'have been notified separately', should read 'will be notified separately'."

All right: but the heading is Circular G.1569—Corrigendum, and the thing was sent to large numbers of small traders, few of whom are likely to have had a classical education. To anyone who has not, as a good warrior in King's Lynn remarks, "Corrigendum" might well be another patent food or a new alloy. Why not "Corrections" or "Amendments"?

And may we once more appeal to our dear brothers of the dailies to look up some of the "dead language" words before they dash them down? The other day I read about a "marathon queue"! Almost any event considered worthy of half a column is now "epic". I have before me a cutting which begins:

"This is the story that will appeal to everyone . . . It is the *odyssey* of a man who hasn't a grouch . . ."

I read on eagerly. What great

traveller was this? To what far lands had he been? How long had he been away? and what were his adventures?

And the story was of a poor Welsh miner who "has been a helpless cripple for ten years", and has never left Wales.

But "marathon queue" is my favourite still: and if anyone can beat that I will eat his hat.

The Department of Health for Scotland, inviting "applications for the appointment of an orthopaedic surgeon", says:

"The appointment is non-superannuable and subject to one month's notice by either party."

I suppose one ought to know what "non-superannuable" means, but, honestly, I don't. Does it mean that the chap can never be dismissed for old age? Evidently not. Does it simply mean "No pension"? Please "advise", because I "anticipate" making an application, and I should like the appointment to be pretty marathon.

And a Medical Officer of Health, writing to *all* the humble houses in a big provincial city, says:

" . . . except where there is some apparent discrepancy needing elucidation."

"Triphibious", they tell me, is still at large. At the risk of being "pedantic", Bobby, let me tell you that "amphibious" came from the Greek *αμφι* (amphi) (on both sides) and *βίος* (bios) (life)—living in two worlds. News, Bobby, turtles, and so on. To use the word to describe battles was always

odd, but it's too late to argue about that now. We can and must object to the mongrel -phibious, in which the -phi, you will note, is half of "amphi", so that "triphibious", if it could mean anything, would mean "living on three and half of both". You might say "tribious", perhaps, if you must say that sort of thing. But I should prefer to talk about "air, sea and land", "three elements", or "three ways", according to the context. Anyhow, *not* "triphibious", though august lips have used it, we know.

"I am a rodent operator", a citizen writes proudly to one of the papers. But a warrior tells me that the man is out of date. In his part of the world the rat-catcher is called "The Area Supervisor—War Agricultural Executive Committee (Pest Department)."

The battle is not in vain.

The Order of the Blue Star goes to Headquarters of the — Armoured Division. They received from Corps H.Q. the following piece of prose:

"All personnel proceeding on U.K. leave and who are desirous of obtaining their entitlement of leave petrol should be instructed to consult the nearest police station in order to ascertain the current address of the Department empowered to issue leave petrol coupons."

The Division translated, and handed it on to their "personnel" thus:

"Anyone going on U.K. leave who wishes to draw his petrol entitlement should ask at the police station nearest his home for the address of the department which now issues leave coupons."

Well done, Division! thirty-three words instead of forty-three. Out go "personnel", "desirous of", "current", and "empowered to".

My only query is whether dear old "entitlement" might not have gone as well—"draw his leave petrol". I seem to remember that we won the 1914-1918 war without any assistance from "entitlement". But it is such a favourite in high places that I must be wrong.

Special prizes.

One of the shiny weeklies, describing a wedding:

" . . . lightning—and great gusts of thunder rolled about the church."

From a novel:

"A quarter of the men (disabled and paralytic) were in bed, lying prone on their backs."

Look up "prone", Bobby.





"Don't look now, but what did I tell you? FIVE rooms and only occupied by those two."

"Visit our Toiletries Department and see

BEAUTIATOR in action."

(From South Africa.)

"There has been a tendency to adopt fancy descriptions . . . Ladies' hair-dressers are loth to describe themselves as such, preferring to trade as beauticians."

(Will you promise, girls, not to go to anyone who calls herself a "beautician"?)

"Mr. — (for the executors) . . . said to Mr. R.: We have the angle that you gave prescriptions in a false name . . . That is the public angle. What is your angle?"

Mr. R. You have not got the correct angle."

From far-off Bengal a warrior sends

me a photograph of a "Village Hall" proclaiming itself as a "Stockist of Stationery, Perfumery" and this and that:

"PROP—RANJAM SINGH (Experienced in serving Military Personels)"

Which recalls the old song:

"On Sunday I walk out with Military Personels."

"Pioneers in popular priced eyewear." (Advt. in a Bournemouth paper.)

"S.S. So-and-So."

"Will you please note that the above opportunity is now scheduled to sail on —?"

The fleeting opportunity we know, but this is the first case of a sailing or twin-screwed opportunity.

"I still believe that our hard-hitting

American girls will hold the upper hand in the final analysis."

(By a Wimbledon champion.)

But whose hand? The chemist's?

"MOTHER OF 7 LISTENS TO COURT FREE ITALIAN."

This is a headline from a paper which boasts that it was once edited by Charles Dickens.

And here is another headline which shows the dangers of the adjectival noun:

"14 OFFICIALS BOMB VICTIMS"

The brutes!

"—Accounting Machines:

Figure Facts

Automatically

Accuracised."

(Advertisement)

Game, set, and match. A. P. H.

Harvest

THE cloudy morning holds promise of rain or sun—who can tell which? Red sky at night—or the radio's hesitant warning: the meteorologist, or the water in the ditch?

The rain has beaten down the standing grain—not in one deluge, or two, but persistently. Saint Swithin has given his sign—the B.B.C. is optimistic: what will the harvest be?

Must it be reaped with sickle and scythe, and tied in the old way, by hand?

The corn ripens. Saint Martin's summer may come. We ploughed, and sowed, and harrowed, and the land endured frost, and a little sunshine in the spring, endured the vicissitudes of the weather—and now we ask ourselves if the harvest, ripening, will justify the plough?

But the old men, mumbling in their places in the village inn, each with a pint pot, tell one another, with ancient, patient faces: "There never yet was a harvest which was not got." R. C. S.

Nine Holes in Search of a Golfer

WE drive around the sea-front to the Approach Course. There is a long queue at the first tee. We take our place behind a family party. At length...

"Ladies first," says the son-in-law. Grandma takes up her stance. "Hit off with the big one," advises grandpa; "the little one's for on the green."

The son-in-law bursts out laughing. "You bin and took left-handed clubs, mother."

"Don't be so silly, Sizzle. How could I? You know I'm not left-handed at nothing."

"He means," explains grandpa, "you got a club meant for a left-hander."

"Don't talk so daft," says grandma; "if you was to play left-handed you'd be going backwards all the time."

Sizzle changes grandma's clubs, during which time the queue lengthens considerably. Grandma tries again. She swings; she misses. The child stands on its head and shrieks with glee. Grandma tries again, with considerable improvement. Sizzle drives and slices.

"Cor strike me, Sizzle," says grandpa disparagingly.

The blonde daughter plays. She bursts her sun-top. All in queue search for safety-pins. Grandpa tees up on a mound of sand six inches high. He picks up his mashie (the big one) and

glances confidently down the queue. He waggles, à la Donald Duck; he raises his club six inches and jerks down at the ball, breaking every known rule of golf. Grandpa's ball rolls to within two feet of the hole.

"Smashin'," says a man in a bowler-hat immediately behind us.

Grandpa smiles proudly and charges up the fairway. We wait until the entire party has holed out, and the Awful Child has put down everyone's score. People at the end of the queue open camp stools.

We move to Arrow No. 2. Grandma has driven into the road.

She goes after the ball and meets someone from the boarding-house. They chat, until grandma is recalled by Sizzle. Grandma loses her ball. Everyone searches, until grandma finds it in her handbag.

"I could 'a' swore I put it down on the grass," she says.

The party drive into a harassed-looking expert who is in a bunker. They encircle him while he endeavours to "explode" the ball.

"Golly!" says the Awful Child, "we only want Bob Hope on a camel."

Grandma is all teed up. Sizzle shouts out: "She's looking the wrong way!"

"I'm sure I'm not," says grandma petulantly. "I hope I know which way I'm looking."

She drives back to the first hole.

"See?" says Sizzle. "You bin an' gone to the wrong 'ole."

"Well, why didn't you tell me?" says grandma.

Sun-top mistakenly plays the harassed gentleman's ball.

"Mine's a Dunlop," he says—"what's yours?"

"I don't mind if I do, sir," says the blonde.

Everyone rolls on the ground in paroxysms of mirth. All golf is temporarily suspended while the quip is passed from hole to hole.

Grandma forgets how many strokes she has taken. The family come back down the fairway and reconstruct the hole.

"One into the bushes," says the Awful Child.

"Two she missed," says Sizzle.

"I never did, Sizzle. Besides, you can't count that as a hit."

"Three, in the bunker; four wot hit the sand-box; five wot grandpa stopped by mistake; six wot got lost; seven wot 'it the flag and bounced off and we wouldn't let 'er 'ave; eight wot didn't go far enough; nine wot nearly went in but not quite; ten wot went in the bunker again..."

Grandpa says "Well, we best get a move on or we shan't get that bathe."

Sizzle loses his ball. The Awful Child climbs a tree. Grandma sits down to rest her feet. The others search. Grandpa is a little testy. The serried ranks behind us are a little testy.

We drive.

"Some people," says grandpa nastily, "can't wait their turn."

Cars

IT often strikes my friends as curious that I have nearly reached forty years of age without learning to drive a car. My reply that if I had done so I might not have reached the age of forty is regarded by my wife as a mere attempt to turn the conversation, and to some extent she is right. Nor is she impressed when I tell her that it is very much cheaper to hire a car when you really need a car than to own one, which you will often use when you do not really need it just because it is standing in the garage. Her answer to this is to ask how often I have hired a car in the last fifteen years. I have been forced to admit that I can remember only three occasions except taxis, which of course do not count. It is curious that although it is psychologically possible to spend hundreds a year on having a

car of your own, it is very difficult to fork out an odd guinea to hire a car to go to see an aunt or even a new film.

Before the war my best reason for refusing to purchase a car was that I had not got the right type of mind for driving. Edith is willing to accept the broad theory that all writers and artists are insane, and I was able to fob her off by pointing out that if I were driving down the Strand and suddenly thought of a good plot for a murder I should be certain to lose control of the vehicle and thus further reduce our already dwindling population.

Unfortunately, while I was in the Army all sorts of extraordinary things happened to me, one of which was that I learned to a limited extent to ride a motor-bicycle. In the early days of the war, before they instituted severe tests for officer-drivers, I obtained a document which authorized me to drive any sort of Army vehicle from a pair of skates to one of those immensely long things that carry two or three tanks and get stuck in mediæval archways. This document was given to me (I still think ill-advisedly)

because I managed for two months in Worcestershire to ride a motor-cycle without killing either myself or anybody else.

It is true that people who saw me flashing through the countryside would probably not have noticed much difference between me and other riders, unless in my alarmed expression, but the fact was that from first to last I was unable to remember which knobs did what and which levers produced what effect.

I used to mount the machine and (sometimes) get it to start with the help of Smivvins, my batman, but after that I was guided by pure chance. Sometimes I went fast and silently, sometimes I went slowly and noisily, but the only lever I was quite sure of (I marked it with a piece of stamp-paper) was the one that cut off the engine altogether, and when I came to a cross-roads or met any considerable traffic I used to press this lever, dismount, and wheel the machine until the road lay clear ahead again.

Later on, in Egypt, I did a good deal of motor-cycling in the desert with considerable success. It mattered little to anybody but myself if my speed

suddenly increased to eighty miles an hour, as there was nothing in the way. Camels gave me curious glances as I flashed by, but there was no harm done, even when I shot over the handle-bars and landed head-first in the sand.

Unfortunately, in going through my Army clothes, Edith has found this document which declares my ability to drive. I try to explain that a motor-cycle is very different from a car, that it has an even larger number of puzzling knobs, and is much fatter and therefore more difficult to miss things with, but she still dallies with the idea of our becoming motorists when cars are again obtainable at a price within our reach.

Meanwhile we have bought a tandem-bicycle, and I intend to ditch her a few times to show her the advantages of walking and going by bus.

o o

"Tynesidemunicipal andurbanauthorities yesterday called meetings for next week to prepare a case in answer to Newcastle's scheme to merge all authoritis within five miles of the city."—Daily paper. Wait for it, wait for it!



"Well, that's MY version of how the accident occurred—now let me tell you his."



"Excuse me, could we have our pawn, please?"

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

A Maid Called Barbara

THE English maid-servant's life—its duties, its recompenses, its gaieties, its mischances—is delightfully portrayed in *The English Abigail* (MACMILLAN, 15/-). Miss DOROTHY MARGARET STUART has a subject made to her hand—and what a light, deft hand it is! Beginning with the Plantagenets and ending with the Victorians, you meet the real maids and the maids of fiction. The real are the most rewarding: from the serving-wench in Bartholomæus Anglicus, who had to be "kepte lowe" by beating, to Carlyle's "Pessima," who was not kept low but discharged by the Sage himself. Between these extremes are depicted a few familiar and many unfamiliar figures. One could have cut down on Lady Verney's "Luce" and Pepys' "Deb," and Pamela, for more of the rarer finds: the "painfull old servant in the scullery" remembered by Charles II, the little black eleven-year-old sold in the Strand in 1769, and Princess Amelia's maid, so honourably commemorated by her mistress's mad father. An assemblage as comprehensive as this is a challenge to discover omissions. There are not many; but one regrets Charlotte Brontë's "Tabby," for whose half-blind sake her mistress used to leave Shirley and take the eyes out of the potatoes before Tabby put them on for dinner.

H. P. E.

Denis Saurat

The convulsions of the last thirty years have restored to dreams the significance which they have had for mankind in all profoundly disturbed ages. Among recent attempts to interrelate dreams and waking experience the

most impressive is DENIS SAURAT's *Death and the Dreamer* (WESTHOUSE, 8/6), which is distinguished by its freedom from emotionalism and over-emphasis, a freedom won by an intense concentration on whatever the writer is describing and a corresponding self-forgetfulness. The author has invented nothing. He opens with a picture of an old countrywoman who has just lost her husband, a native of the French Pyrenees. In a few scenes he builds up her past life of hardship, bitterness and frustrated love, and her present security in the feeling that now she has "a protector among the dead," for her husband by dying has dissolved both her fear of death and the barrier which separated them in life. The experience of the old countrywoman repeats itself in a different form in the dreams of her son, three of which in particular, *The Mountain*, *The Sphere* and *The Stairway*, are described with an extraordinary power and precision. In the deliverance from fear Christ plays the central part, and much of the book is devoted to elucidating the author's conception of Christ as the apex of consciousness. Interwoven with this metaphysical theme, and greatly enriching it, are scenes from the author's own life; and it is this blending of different levels of thought, feeling and experience which stamps the book as a work of genius.

H. K.

Arcadia, at a Price

Dr. Johnson once horrified Boswell by remarking that were he to live in the country he would live "in a much better way, much more happily." Mr. C. HENRY WARREN opens his anthology of the life and work of the countryside with this shattering pronouncement to prove, one supposes, that the most inveterate townee knows *The Good Life* (EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, 10/6) when he sees it, but is unprepared to pay the cost. Because the "why" of living in the country is so obvious, and the "how" so difficult, this discerning collection of prose and poetry is divided into two parts. The first gives you the "why." What makes men like Cowper, Wordsworth, Cobbett, Kingsley, Hudson and Hopkins "content," as poor Boswell said, "to be at a distance from their literary friends"? The second half of the book shows you the people who actually keep the countryside going, from Piers Plowman to his present-day successor. This—the "how" section—is at once a confirmation of the "why" section and a counterblast to it. The unvoiced moral of the whole stimulating book is that the true country-lovers are of the Cobbett-Kingsley school: men who confront both the ideal and the practicable, and do something, however small, to make both ends meet.

H. P. E.

Brentford

Brentford, the county town of Middlesex, is so full of literary and other associations that there seems no reason why they should not form the subject of a book, without any admixture of fiction such as Mr. ROBERT HENREY has used in his otherwise very pleasant chronicle of Brentford's history during the last three hundred years. "At the age of eighteen Madeleine had never heard of Brentford," Mr. HENREY tells us on the first page of *The King of Brentford* (PETER DAVIES, 12/6). But Philip holds her in his arms in a Soho street, and thereafter she turns her course westward to Brentford, where Philip's parents live. A son is born to her shortly before the second World War, and Mr. HENREY is thus able to exhibit Brentford as it appears to this child, to his parents, and to Philip's father, a white-haired vicar, survivor from a more gracious age. However, the reader soon becomes habituated to these somewhat unsubstantial figures, and rambles about

Brentford, Kew, Richmond and Gunnersbury Park without being unduly disturbed when they drift into view. It is a richly historical district; and if some Hollywood magnate should have the happy idea of combining in a single film the chief episodes associated with it, Julius Cæsar could be crossing the Thames while near by George III was chasing Fanny Burney round a walnut tree, and Pope and Horace Walpole could be exchanging epigrams while King Edward VII was waiting to be released from a traffic block in Brentford High Street.

H. K.

"V. G."

Miss VIRGINIA GRAHAM, being the daughter of the late Harry Graham, affords, in the deftness and humour of her writing, one of the best modern instances of heredity. But her gifts are individual: she has pathos too, and in her volume of collected verse, *Consider the Years* (CAPE, 5/-), there are as well some sharp raps dealt out to certain complacencies and follies of our day. There is, for instance, that fascinating poem "Facing the Music," with its refrain "We who love music are not pretty," and its perfect portrait of the high-brow concert-goers who "strive all in vain to emulate Miss Sitwell in gowns which should but do not fit a bit well, while over us there languorously floats the smell of mackintoshes." The "Gentleman in Row E," who leads "the orchestra in perfect time," and the woes of a Rhinemaiden "dazedly, dizzily swung" are both gleanings from the field of music of which Miss GRAHAM is so obviously a frequenter; but "Fox-Trot," on the other hand, is a description of a Hunt Ball which every votary of such entertainments will probably refuse to recognize. It is quite evident that, though she has taught herself "to love green things," she is at heart a sophisticated and discriminating Londoner, but it should be added that her French and German verses are delicious, particularly "Hilfe! Hilfe!" the cry of a wretched German embarrassed by the acquisition of "Ein Nun mit ein Moustache." Those who are wise enough to possess themselves of this collection of impressions of our recent war-time activities will not need to be reminded that most of them first saw the light, over the not inappropriate initials "V. G.," in the pages of *Punch*.

B. E. S.

Squalor in Bayswater

In *House Under Mars* (HEINEMANN, 8/6) Miss NORAH HOULT takes the front off a block of service flatlets during the war years and describes without favour what she finds inside. Her revelation is not pretty, nor does it always escape the trivial. The decline in the character of Gladstone Mansions follows closely the decline in the character of the housekeeper, who, from being a careful hard-working woman watching her employer's interests, gradually becomes a slattern. Harassed by bombs and worry she lets things slide, and as the unwonted smells of dirt and cabbage ascend from her basement so the house itself passes imperceptibly from something near respectability to being a port of call for itinerant soldiers where serious drinking and petty thieving excite little comment against a generous background of drama. In her journey downhill Mrs. Bayliss finds friends, particularly in a prostitute of almost Calvinist rectitude and a gentleman from the black market with the gift of sympathy; her own morals are shaken a little loose in the process, but not so badly that she cannot behave with gallantry or that the return of her husband from the forces is not in time to pull her together again. She is a special sort of war-victim and in spite of everything Miss HOULT makes us warm to her. One grows a

trifle weary of the record of goings-on above stairs, but there is much accurate observation in this novel; no great distinction of writing, but a lively insight into human nature.

E. O. D. K.

Writer and Sailor Too

"When I heard the crack of my spine as two vertebrae were crushed I knew I had had it." That is the opening sentence of Mr. DUNCAN WEBB's book, *Sailor, You've Had It* (W. H. ALLEN, 8/6), and the concluding sentences are: "We are not so young now. We gave our youth. Some gave more." Luckily for the author and for the reader a statement before the last three runs: "War can be fun, especially if you are young," and though Mr. WEBB seems to have met with more horror than fun during the years when he turned from being a reporter back into a sailor again, he writes with gusto of all the happenings. When war broke out he was sub-editing on the *Sunday Graphic*, went to the Royal Albert Docks to look for a ship, and became quartermaster in the s.s. *Oxfordshire*, which was being converted into a naval hospital ship. In her he sailed to Freetown. The next three chapters of the book are concerned with Africa (darkest of the dark too!) as seen by the reporter-sailor. The book weaves to and fro a trifle confusingly between the war and the years before, but it is always interesting and always exciting. From quartermaster, WEBB became an able seaman and had a chapter of adventure in Buenos Aires. Later he became a chief officer, was invalided from the Merchant Navy in 1944, and was accredited to the R.A.F. as a war reporter. The beginning of the book describes the end of his last flight and the results of his baling out after the Lancaster bomber was shot down. The author has had some remarkable experiences, and has made a remarkably stimulating book out of them.

B. E. B.



"I said 'How is it you always manage to sound like Donald Duck on this contraption?'"

The Truth About Industrial Design

YOU must have noticed it, this alarming tendency nowadays for people to criticize bad design. Almost everybody is doing it—even housewives. They are hypercritical of every damthing in the home. The sink isn't the right height, the handles on the cupboard are too loose, the plate-rack drains into the frying-pan—you know the kind of thing. Well, I want to warn people about criticizing bad design before it is too late.

What happened in the old days when you had a sink of inconvenient height? Did you run around squealing that the thing was badly designed? No, you engaged a kitchen-maid to fit it. Or you stood on a bucket or something. To-day the supreme test of good design seems to be whether or not a thing is easy to clean and keep clean. So a square tray is pronounced unsatisfactory because dirt collects in its corners. Did you ever . . . ? Don't people know that corners were designed for the very purpose of trapping dirt? Any geologist will tell you that the earth's crust, the lithosphere, is about eighty-six per cent. pure dirt. You can have this dirt where you want it—suspended in fine particles in the atmosphere you breathe, as a thin film covering everything you use, or tucked away unobtrusively in grooves, corners and ornaments. I know what my choice is, every time.

Then, take clocks. The critics say that a square dial is bad because the

hands go round. They say that time is distorted at the corners when figures are arranged in a rectangle. Well, well! Have you ever seen a man take out his watch, consult it, put it back and repeat the performance a moment later when you have asked him the time? That man's watch is always round. Round watches and clocks don't respond at the first time of asking. A square face does. That distortion at the corners makes us look pretty closely, with our wits about us, and what we discover is hammered home into our consciousness. I am not impressed by the theory that time, like the hands of a clock, goes round. Time is the space on a clock between meals: there are four meals in the sensible man's day and there are four sides to a square.

And how the critics hate imitations and shams! They condemn one house because it has a mock-Tudor façade and another because it is imitation Georgian. They want all houses to look their age, their rent and rates. I don't. There's a lot to be said for jerry-built period houses, especially the semi-detached kind constructed on the lean-to principle. Does it matter if the wealth of oak beams is really a wealth of reinforced concrete girders, except that concrete hurts rather more? And doesn't imitation stuff make you feel sort of comfy-cosy inside. The houses they build to-day are too modern: they look horribly new and

only a few deceptive minutes from the station. With mock-something houses you know where you are. You expect draughts to emerge from every floor-board, door and window-frame and prepare your defences accordingly. With the modernistic house you are taken unawares. The roof leaks and you have no bucket handy; the doors and windows rattle and bang, bricks tumble down the chimney and the bed tips you out in the middle of the night—and there are no poltergeists to blame. Anything can happen in a sham house, but it is always perfectly understandable. It doesn't wear you down with worry and repairs.

And what about teapots? If they drip the housewife condemns their design automatically. She looks at the moulded love-birds on the lid, the roses on the handle and the ivy climbing up the spout and is horrified because the thing isn't purely functional. In my day we didn't scream our heads off because a teapot dripped or looked unfunctional: we got out the work-basket and ran up a nice functional tea-cosy for it.

It all boils down (not the tea—this is a fresh paragraph) to the fact that the younger generation has been spoon-fed too long. Young people to-day lack the enterprise to adapt themselves to bad design. It makes you wonder whether it is worth while going on producing the stuff for them. HOD.



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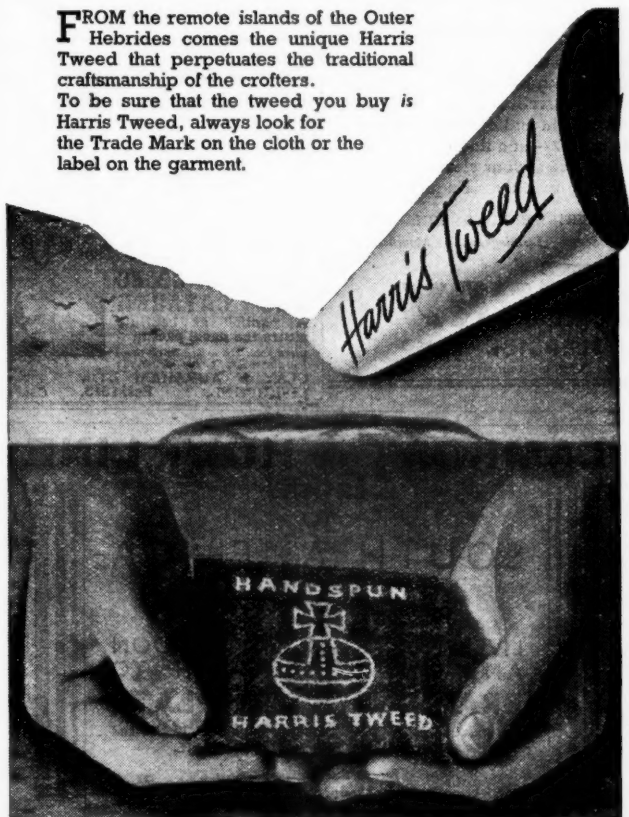
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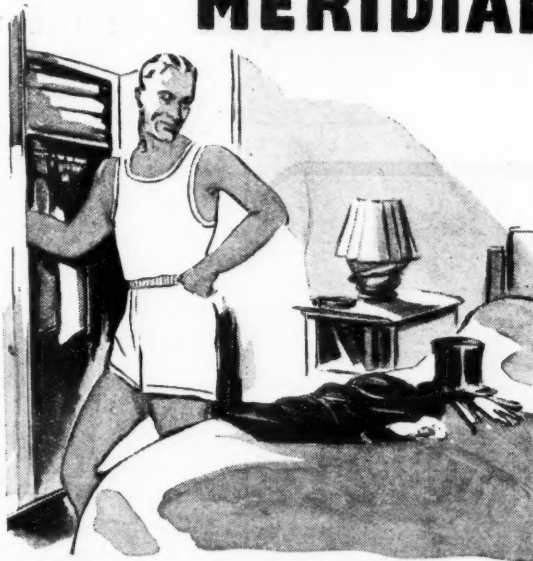


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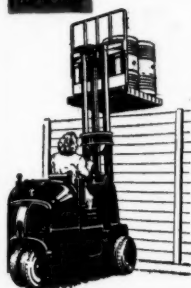
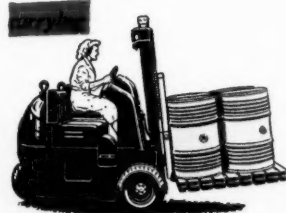
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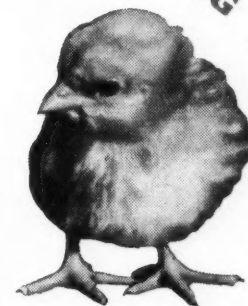
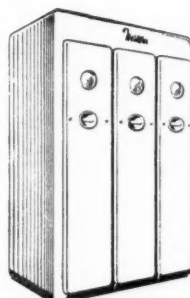
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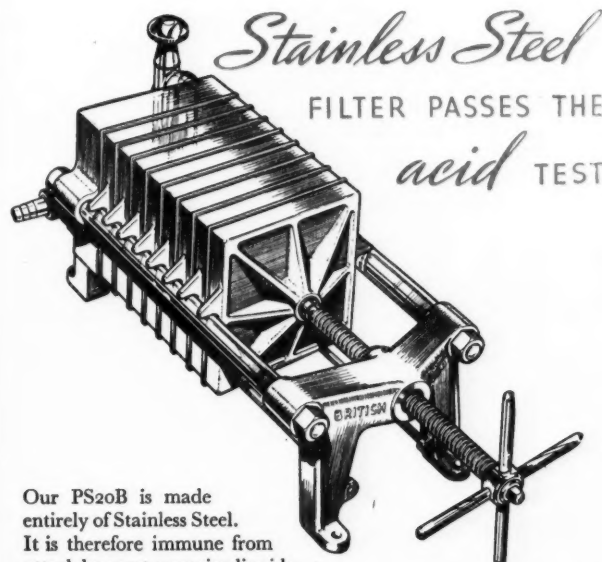
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